

LEHIGH ACRES FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT

COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

June 18, 2008

The June 18, 2008 meeting of the Lehigh Acres Fire Control and Rescue District Board of Commissioners was opened at 4:00 PM by President Berndt. Present were Commissioners Berndt, Adams, Barrett, Guzman and Hemingway. Chief Don Adams, Assistant Chief Jeff Haugh, Assistant Chief Solon Duncan, Deputy Chief Bill Liedtke, Fire Marshal Ken Bennett, PIO Patrick Comer, Administrative Assistant Susan Platas, Secretary Jill Marcolini, and Bookkeeper Anita Kressel. Attorney Richard Pringle arrived at 4:20pm.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner Berndt asked Chief Adams to give the invocation.

Commissioner Berndt asked if there were any additions, corrections or deletions to the agenda. Chief Adams stated he would like to add for Attorney Pringle under unfinished business, lease agreement with Verizon.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Guzman made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended Commissioner Hemingway second. Motion Passed.

Presentation of 2006/2007 Audit:

Jeff Tuscan from Tuscan and Co. P.A. reported to the Board an overview of the Draft of the 2006/2007 audit. He requests the Board to approve the audit so he could forward it to the State. John Lissack from Tuscan and Co. also gave the Board a brief comparative summary of graphs that were handed out to all commissioners. After brief questions from the Board, Commissioner Hemingway motioned to approve the audit from Tuscan and Co. with a second from Commissioner Guzman. Motion Passed.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Minutes of April 16, 2008 Meeting
- Treasurers Report

Commissioner Guzman made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Barrett second. Motion Passed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

CHIEF ADAMS:

- We had a brief hurricane exercise to integrate personnel into the work flow of an emergency by having key personnel involved in setting up a POD (Point of Distribution).
- Received thank you letters from Senator Mat Hudson, Florida House of Representatives and Fire Chief Metzger for the assistance provided during the May 29-30, 2008 wildfire that raged through 800 acres in Golden Gate.
- Attended the FASD Certified District Manager (CDM) Program in partnership with Florida State University- Reubin O'DAskew School of Public Administration and Policy. He stated that he has a written project to be completed before being awarded the certification in June of next year. Chief Adams also thanked the Board for allowing him to attend the CDM program.
- A memorandum was sent out to our personnel to address the concerns some firefighters had about reported estimated declines in property values and the projected tax revenue shortfalls. There was a rumor that 20 firefighters would be laid off. The memorandum was to assure personnel the rumor was false. Everything is being done to avoid any layoffs.
- Chief Adams stated many of you know and have seen the estimated 2008 forecast regarding ad valorem which will and has affected the District's revenue. Over the past 2 years we have positioned ourselves to be debt free and to have sufficient reserves to continue operations with current personnel. Chief Adams handed out to all commissioners a graph that indicates the amount of revenue received from October to May for five years. He explained the graph that the line tracks fairly well each month except in the month of May where there is a decline in revenue. He stated last year at this same time we were behind 1.9 million dollars and then in July received a large amount of the revenue. Chief Adams also confirmed that there is a strong possibility that we may not receive the full amount of 2.97 million dollars. As of last month staff has been told to hold all spending unless the projects were for life safety or projects that have already been started and not finished.
- Chief Adams informed commissioners they will be receiving a quarterly report on response time. The time will be reported differently as in the past.
- Chief Adams stated that Patrick Comer our PIO is also a PEO. His position is 75 to 80 percent public education.
- Patrick Comer gave the Board a review of a project he put together with the 4th grade class at Mirror Lakes Elementary. Mr. Comer and the students made a CD on the consequences of kids starting fires. All the students received a copy of the CD and Mr. Comer handed one out to each of the commissioners.

DVP 6 and 19:

- **DVP 6: None**
- **DVP 19: None**

ATTORNEY RICHARD PRINGLE:

- Had changes in the contract from Tuscan & Co. P.A.
- Verizon lease agreement, under Unfinished Business.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: NONE.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS: NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Station #104:** Commissioner Adams stated to President Berndt that he would like an update on Station 104, when it would be ready and what the hold ups are. Commissioner Berndt asked Mr. Rob Fowler, Jr. who was in the audience to give an update. Rob Fowler, Jr. gave the Board an update on Station #104. He stated they were waiting to get the power on at that station for the Fire Pump and Fire Alarm System. Fire Marshal Ken Bennett also gave an update on the inspection process and information regarding the current permits. Deputy Chief Bill Liedtke gave an update on the water issue, stating the Health Department has not approved the drinking water at the station.
- **Property for Station #106:** Commissioner Hemingway stated that the road project for widening Homestead Road is on hold with the county at this time. He suggested holding off on the purchasing of property at this time but keeping eyes and ears open to possibilities of land purchases within the next 5 year plan.
- **Verizon Lease Agreement:** Attorney Pringle stated to the Board that a decision would need to be made tonight regarding Verizon putting a tower on the property of Station #101, or the Board could refuse at this time. After brief questions from the Board regarding liability and the lease agreement. Commissioner Guzman made a motion to go with Verizon tower including final negotiations with Attorney Pringle with a lease agreement, Commissioner Hemingway second. Motion Passed. Commissioner Guzman also made a motion to allow Verizon to apply with special exemption at their expense. Commissioner Barrett second. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Approval of Engagement Letter form Tuscan & Co.:** Chief Adams handed out a copy of an Approval of Engagement Letter from Tuscan & Co., to be approved by the Board. Attorney Pringle stated that he had made changes to the contract and that he had concurred with Jeff Tuscan from Tuscan & Co. Commissioner Guzman made a motion to approve the Engagement letter as amended from Tuscan & Co. with a second from Commissioner Adams. Motion passed.

- **Station 102:** Chief Adams is requesting to place Station #102 on hold due to the economic downturn and projections of revenue for future years. Commissioner Hemingway expressed concerns regarding the roof on Station #102 and also the mechanics area. Chief Adams stated we may need to use our reserves for salaries and expenditures for the department.
- **Budget Workshops and Hearing Dates:** Chief Adams handed out a copy of an August and September calendar to all commissioners regarding the Budget Workshops and Hearing Dates for them to review. After some discussion Commissioner Berndt suggested the first Budget workshop changed to Friday August 8th at 4:00 pm. He also stated he would like to add a 4th budget workshop date; Tuesday September 2nd. The Budget Workshops and Budget Hearing Dates are as follows:
 - **August 8th 1st Budget Workshop 4:00 pm**
 - **August 21st 2nd Budget Workshop 6-9 pm**
 - **August 27th 3rd Budget Workshop 4:00 pm (if necessary)**
 - **Sept. 2nd 4th Budget Workshop 4:00 pm**
 - **Sept. 10th Tentative Budget Hearing 5:01 pm**
 - **Sept. 23rd Final Budget Hearing 5:01 pm**

Commissioner Adams made a motion to accept the workshop calendar as amended with Commissioner Guzman second. Motion passed.

- **Proposed 2008/2009 Millage rate:** Commissioner Berndt would like to table this until the July Commission meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Mr. Robert Anderson, Lehigh resident handed out to staff and Board copies of the News Star and asked everyone to turn to page A4 pointing out the article he had written, relating to open government and fiscal responsibility. Mr. Anderson stated that the Board of Commissioners do not answer the public's questions, and in the coming months they will continue not to answer the public's questions.
- Mr. Barry Ashman, Lehigh resident stated that when he was on the Fire Board he answered all public questions.
- Mr. Timothy Holt a Lehigh resident questioned a station being built on Williams Road. Commissioner Berndt answered that issue has been closed.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

- Commissioner Hemingway: Glad to see more people in the audience tonight. A lot accomplished at the meeting tonight. Pleased with the results, graphs, and explanations from Tuscan and Co.
- Commissioner Barrett: Thanked the public for coming out. Special thank you to PIO Patrick Comer for coming to her church the previous week for fire education information, and the firefighters bringing the engine and ambulance.
- Commissioner Adams: Thanked the public for coming out. Stated to the public to feel free to contact him with any questions.
- Commissioner Guzman: Thanked the public for coming out, also thanked Bookkeeper Anita Kressel and staff with the audit. Thanked Tuscan and Co. Commissioner Guzman also stated that Lehigh Fire District has and will continue to have top notch, cutting edge service to the residents of Lehigh.
- Commissioner Berndt: He has had several conversations with Chief Adams concerning the 2008/2009 budget beginning last year. He stated that Chief Adams and staff have been working on the 2008/2009 fiscal year's budget since March.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

- Chief Adams thanked the staff for their hard work during the audit. He appreciates their hard work and support.

Adjourned at 6:15 pm.